

SESSION OF 2023

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE ON HOUSE BILL NO. 2236

As Amended by House Committee on Education

Brief*

HB 2236, as amended, would state that a parent has a right to direct the education, upbringing, and moral or religious training of their children. The bill would also direct local boards of education to adopt policies and procedures to guarantee the free exercise of these rights and establish a means by which a parent could remove their child from a lesson or class based upon objections to the course material.

The bill would define the following terms:

- “Activities” would include any presentation, assembly, lecture, or other event facilitated by a school or school district;
 - The term would not include student presentations;
- “Educational materials” would include, but not be limited to, curriculum, textbooks, reading materials, videos, digital materials, websites, online applications, and other material given or provided to a student for instruction; and
- “Parent” would mean a parent, legal guardian, or custodian who has authority to act on behalf of a child.

The bill would allow parents to object to any educational materials or activities at a school district their child attends and withdraw the student from the class or programming if

*Supplemental notes are prepared by the Legislative Research Department and do not express legislative intent. The supplemental note and fiscal note for this bill may be accessed on the Internet at <http://www.kslegislature.org>

the educational material or activity meets one of the following criteria:

- Is not included in the approved district curriculum or state educational standards; or
- Impairs the parent's sincerely held beliefs, values, or principles.

The bill would state that the academic record of any student withdrawn from the class, educational program, or activity based upon the criteria in the bill could not be adversely affected by the student's withdrawal.

The bill also would require all local boards of education to adopt policies and procedures to guarantee a parent's free exercise of religion which must contain, but is not limited to, the implementation of the bill.

Background

The bill was introduced by the House Committee on Education at the request of Representative Thomas.

House Committee on Education

In the House Committee hearing, **proponent** testimony was provided by a representative of the Kansas Policy Institute and a private citizen who is a parent and homeschool educator. The proponents generally stated the bill is needed to better address the concerns of parents about the content of curriculum and educational materials presented to their children. Written-only proponent testimony was provided by representatives of the Kansas Catholic Conference, Kansas Family Voice, and three private citizens.

Opponent testimony was provided by representatives of the Kansas Association of School Boards, Kansas National Education Association, and United School Administrators of

Kansas. The opponents generally stated the bill was too broad and could allow for students to opt out of low performing classes or assignments. The opponents also stated the issue should be left to local school boards, some of whom have independently chosen to adopt parents bill of rights' policies. Written-only opponent testimony was provided by the Kansas PTA, State Board of Education, League of Women Voters Kansas, and two private citizens.

Written-only neutral testimony was provided by a representative of Kansas Interfaith Action.

The House Committee amended the bill by replacing reference to an educational material or activity that harms the student to instead describe an educational material or activity that is not included in approved district curriculum or state educational standards.

Fiscal Information

According to the fiscal note prepared by the Division of the Budget on the bill, as introduced, any fiscal effect would occur only for school districts and would be negligible.

Education; parents; rights; school districts; children; educational materials and activities; policies and procedures